



Peter Pan PSHE/Citizenship Activity

Peter Pan is a story full of themes – some quite unsettling, for example:

- **Jealousy:** Tinker Bell is jealous of Wendy, and does not welcome her. She doesn't want her to be close to Peter, and in fact, she only obliges to help the children get to Neverland (with her golden dust) – because of her feelings for Peter.
- **Motherhood and adoption:** This is at the heart of the story. Peter Pan is the boy who would not grow up, and he has no mother. Peter convinces Wendy to come to Neverland so she can see a mermaid – but he really wants her to act as a mother to himself and the Lost Boys. She almost 'adopts' the Lost Boys.
- **The responsibility of fatherhood:** Peter Pan is unwilling, on the other hand, to play father to Wendy's mother. He will only accept the role if it is 'pretend' – but he is unwilling to accept actual responsibility.
- **Actual fatherhood:** What about the exact role of the father in Peter Pan? Mr Darling is more of a temperamental child than a nurturing, paternal figure.
- The idea of children becoming separated from their parents is a disturbing one, though the book was, to all intents and purposes, written for and aimed at children. The fighting with, and killing of pirates, and the idea that growing up and taking responsibility may be something to avoid, is also troubling. The tale is, as a result, full of interesting topics for discussion during PSHE sessions. Consider some of the followings as you open up class/group discussions:
- In Neverland children live without grown ups. What do you think would be fun about living like this? The Lost Boys miss having stories told to them. What would you miss? Would you get homesick?
- Were the characters right to get into so many fights? Is fighting a good way to solve an argument? Did Hook deserve to die? What about the Red Skins?
- The Darling family have a dog as a nanny to the children. There are actually many ways in which dogs help look after us in real life. Find out all you can about guard dogs, guide dogs, dogs that have saved lives, hearing dogs for the deaf, police dogs, dogs trained to help people with epilepsy, etc.
- Peter is in charge of the Lost Boys when they are in Neverland, yet he shirks the role of father and shirks responsibility. He 'makes believe' there is food and often leads the boys into danger. How do you think a person in charge of others should behave? Is he a good person to have in charge (even if he is good fun!)?
- Peter Pan never wants to grow up. Why do you think this might be? What do you think would be some of the pros and some of the cons about staying young forever? What would you avoid? (bills, responsibilities, mortgages, eventual death?). What would you miss out on? (the opportunity to be independent, the chance to have a family of your own?)
- Tinker Bell is not very kind to Wendy? Why do you think this might be? How can we resolve problems if we are jealous of other people becoming friends with our friends?
- What do you think about the loss of a parent, living without a parent, or being part of an adoptive or foster family? (NB: approach these issues within the group with sensitivity).